HELLSHOCK

A Hellshocking Conclusion—and a Beginning

The comics field is filled with unfinished series, partially-done graphic novels, and other abandoned projects, so it's certainly not news when yet another miniseries fails to make it to the end of its run. It *is* news, however, when a creator returns to a project he left unfinished years before and—prepare yourself for a shock—*finishes it!*

That's just what *Jae Lee* is doing, however. Lee, best known for his work on ***The Inhumans, Captain America, Hulk/Thing: Hard Knocks***, and the upcoming ***Batman: Jekyll & Hyde***, made a name for himself with the Vertigo-esque ***Hellshock*** limited series from Image comics... but he never finished the saga. Now, the better part of a decade later, Lee is taking care of unfinished business. His ***Hellshock*** collected edition will include three issues released in the late 1990's—and two issues that readers have never seen before!

"The story we are collecting is the beginning of my personal sprawling 'epic,'" Lee told ***CSN***. "We start off meeting a young woman who is just beginning to face the hardships of life. She is preoccupied with wanting to start her life over, to make things perfect, to do things right. She feels hopelessly and completely lost. Her days are filled with despair. Her nights are spent alone with thoughts of ending it all. In a psychiatric hospital, she meets the mysterious but compelling Daniel. He's either a bright light that will help guide her out of her despair—or he will drive her deeper into madness."

While this is the beginning of Lee's ***Hellshock*** saga, it's not the first published ***Hellshock*** series. "The first four-issue mini series was produced in 1994," Lee said. "And then most of the second volume came out in 1997. The second series, which I had never finished previously, is the work being completed and collected now. This was my first creator-owned project, and I wanted it to be *perfect*. The problem, however, with going for perfection is that you can become creatively paralyzed as you continuously develop and reject versions that are only 'good enough.'

"After a number of more years as a professional, I realized that perfection was an elusive chimerical goal, the pursuit of which was keeping me from finishing my story. There was a ***New York Times*** article recently on 'A-types' who sabotage themselves because they have to make the 'best' decision. I sort fell into that trap.

"So, after years of doing other work, and having ***Hellshock*** always on my mind, I was ready to work on the final act to this story. I was finally happy with the direction I was taking the story, and now am really looking forward to seeing the fans' reactions."

Over the years, there have been reports that Lee never finished the second series because he was unhappy with what had seen print, but the writer/artist explained that wasn't exactly correct. "It was the *first* mini series that I was unhappy with," Lee said. "I was too young at the time. My tastes were young. I thought it was cool to have people impaled on spikes and devils and angels bludgeoning themselves over and over until blood sprayed all over the pages. A few years later, I looked back on the book and thought, 'man, I was screwed up!'

"The second series was on the opposite end of the spectrum. It was an introspective look at a character that we could all relate to in way or another. Not only did the writing mature, but the art in the second series matured as well. I wanted my characters to look real in order to reflect the realistic tone of the book. I think without ***Hellshock***, I never would have graduated from my over-muscled, no-bone-anatomy, body-parts-in-the-wrong-places good old days." (And for those wondering if they'll ever see that first ***Hellshock*** project, Lee confirmed that "the first series will be collected at a later date, to coincide with the next series.")

While ***Hellshock*** is frequently described as a *Jae Lee* solo project, the writer/artist asserts that "I couldn't have done this without *José Villarrubia*. Before he was the colorist on the book, he was my friend and teacher. It's because of him that I looked beyond what I was doing at the time and tried to evolve as an artist. I never had any formal art training, so working with Jose—who's a professor at Maryland Institute Collage of Art, one of the best art schools in the country—was an educational experience that changed my life." Lee added that, "in the first miniseries, *Scott Lobdell* helped me tweak the dialogue of the last couple of issues."

As far as Lee is concerned, there was no question that he would someday finish the story. "As I said before, it's never been gone for me—just gestating in my mind. I do have to credit *Nick Barrucci* of Dynamic Forces for this relaunch, though. He thought it was a shame for the character to be in limbo. ***Hellshock*** is my baby, but in many ways, Nick is his godfather—or male midwife. He and I would talk constantly, and when he launched The Creators Universe trading-card series back in '93—featuring every well-known creator such as *Frank Miller, Howard Chaykin, Art Adams, Walter Simonson, Barry Windsor-Smith*, to name a few, and some the greatest creations (***Sin City*** was there, and *Arthur Adams's* ***Monkeyman & O'Brien***, *Dan Brereton's* ***Nocturnals***, and *Barry Windsor-Smith's* ***Young Gods*** first appeared in that series), Nick asked me to have my creator-owned character appear in there. It was an honor to be in such great company—if not humbling.

"I had always intended to bring ***Hellshock*** back, but it's not as simple as just doing the book and publishing it. Nick makes sure that all I have to worry about is writing and drawing the book and Dynamic Forces will handle the rest. When ***Hellshock*** first launched, Nick helped me get the cover to the Capital City's Advance Order Catalogue (the second biggest distributor at the time) and arranged coverage in other high-profile magazines and catalogues. He made sure ***Hellshock*** had as much coverage as possible. On a personal level, it was really gratifying.

"On the flip side, the actual fact that you have all of this coverage kind of hits you in the face that you're doing something with a lot of potential. That can be intimidating, which made me want to make it even better (what a conundrum it became).

"When Nick told me that if I gave my best foot forward to give the fans the best story possible, he would work hard to give me the same attention by promoting this as much as possible, and that helped to convince me that I had to step up and finish this final chapter of this story. It always bothered me that ***Hellshock*** was incomplete for so long. Now I have a chance to finish this chapter of the story and set it up for more."

Hellshock will include the three issues of the four-part series that were previously published, along with forty-four pages worth of new material. Wait a minute—wouldn't that mean that Lee is adding two issues' worth of previously-unseen material to the book? That's right, and Lee explained how that came to be. "The first twenty-two pages will show you the very first incarnation of ***Hellshock***. It was written and drawn in 1993 and predates the first mini series. This is the first time *anyone* will be seeing them. The last twenty-two will be the never-before-completed issue four of the second ***Hellshock*** volume. I'm finalizing those pages even as we speak."

Is Lee taking advantage of this opportunity to tweak any of the previously-published material as well? "Yes. There were a few pages that make me cringe now, so I've made and will still make some changes (what was that about not striving for perfection?). They won't be radical changes that will upset the story, but rather changes that I wanted to make because I have the advantage of hindsight now."

Will this collection complete the ***Hellshock*** saga, or is there room for Lee to continue the story at some future date? "This is just the beginning," he said. "I have the story mapped out for years to come. Like I said, this is the start of my epic."

And Lee promises that fans of metaphysical horror won't be disappointed with what's in the works for the series. "***Hellshock*** will definitely take a turn towards the dark side in the next storyline. And to quote my 'Uncle' Stan, 'stay tuned true believer,' there's more to come!"

What are Lee's best memories of his original run on ***Hellshock***—and what were his most challenging experience with the original series? "The most challenging would have to be the realization that I can't make everything perfect—but name me any creator who thinks he does. I have this amazing story I want to tell, but it's incredibly frustrating when it doesn't come out the way you visualized it. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just plug our computers into our brains and let the story tell itself without self doubt and reworkings to creep their way in?

"My best memories would have to be the people who helped me bring this book together. Not just Nick and Jose, but also *Richard Starkings, David Larks*, and *Scott Lobdell*, and the people who were helping and supporting behind the scenes, such as *Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, John Nee, Clydene Nee, Eric Stephenson, Tom Stormonth, Wayne Markley, Marty Stever*, and *Harris Miller*.

"The *best* part, however, would have to be the fan reaction. I loved reading every letter. I still have them all. Yep, this was sorta before the whole e-mail thing. I hope that I get at least half of the fan mail I got the first time."

Hellshock, a 144-page collected edition produced by Dynamic Forces for Image Comics, is scheduled in both a standard trade paperback ($19.99) and signed hardcover edition $49.99). Additionally, Dynamic Forces will offer a remarked hardcover edition featuring an original sketch by Lee for $149.99.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS

Double Shock

In conjunction with Dynamic Forces, ***Comic Shop News*** is inviting readers to enter our **Hellshock Giveaway Contest**. Send us your name and address as well as the name and address of the friendly neighborhood comic shop where you pick up ***CSN***, and we'll award two copies of the remarked hardcover edition of ***Hellshock***—one to you and one to your comic shop—to the lucky winner! You can e-mail your entry to hellshock@comicshopnews (please put **Hellshock** in the subject line as well), or you can mail your entries to

Hellshock Contest
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Marietta GA 30066

Please enter only once (multiple entries will be disqualified) and submit your entries on or before June 15th, 2005.

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Vengeance Is Sweet

With the release of ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis***, some of DC's upcoming spinoff miniseries became a little clearer. ***The OMAC Project*** is the direct continuation of the ***Countdown*** storyline, flowing the repercussions of the murder of a hero and the revelation of the existence of a secret cabal seeking to control all superhumans. ***Villains United*** is, by and large, what its title says—the worst of the worst of the DCU's villains joining forces to exploit the weaknesses in the superhero community. Likewise, ***The Rann-Thanagar War*** is straightforward in its scope.

But what about ***Day of Vengeance***?

Originally described by *Dan DiDio*, Executive Editor of the DCU, as being the miniseries that redefined magic in the world of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman, the six-issue ***Day of Vengeance*** was unclear in its relation to the big ***Infinite Crisis*** picture. But writer *Bill Willingham* knows exactly how it fits together, the role the Spectre and the new Eclipso (and just wait 'til you see who she is!) play in the story, and the identity of the heroes in the new ShadowPact team.

Willingham first became involved when *"Dan DiDio and Joey Cavalieri* called me and asked if I wanted to do a project, and then described roughly what the six issue miniseries needed to be, and added that they needed my answer yesterday. So it was just a cold, out of the blue call," Willingham told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "Although it had a little preliminary basis in that I had started to do a magical series for Vertigo which was going to be the catch-all book for all their magically-based characters that didn't have a home of their own. We tried several versions of that, and it just didn't work out, so we finally agreed to drop the idea.

"But everything they *didn't* like about my ideas at Vertigo were the things that they liked for the DCU. Vertigo didn't want a 'super hero team,' didn't want them hanging out in a clubhouse, and the like. In asking me if I wanted to do this, Dan and Joey asked if I didn't have something in the works with a team of magic people hanging out in a clubhouse. I told them yes, but Vertigo didn't like it, and they told me they *loved* it. So that all got put into it—in a fashion.

Willingham explained how the series spins out of the events of ***Countdown.*** "I don't think we're spoiling anything by revealing that the Spectre is now without a human host, and is involved in this—the covers do a good job of showing that... Eclipso and Spectre team up—we know that much. Since the new Eclipso is a female now, she basically seduces the Spectre, and convinces him that if he *really* wanted to stop evil in the world, he needs to destroy magic. Magic is, basically, breaking the laws of nature—and evil people break the laws. Quit going after individual perpetrators, and just wipe out evil all at once."

Would a little seduction from a sexy female Eclipso be enough to sway an ultrapowerful being like The Spectre? "Well, consider that the Spectre is a little screwed up right now because he's coming off a weird trip with a human host, and is now without a human host for the first time in a long while. Without that guidance, that

conscience, he's a little wigged out, so that when someone makes what may or may not be a good argument about destroying a whole lot of evil, he falls for it.

The whole idea is that, in the DCU, the Spectre is the one character you *don't* want coming after you. At some point in the story, someone actually lays it all out, and says, 'If the Spectre wants you dead, you're dead.' If you know he's gunning for you, the absolute best you can do is get your affairs in order, and that's it."

"What happens in the series is that a bunch of people decide to get their affairs in order. We've created a pan-dimensional bar where all of the magic characters hang out – the 'clubhouse' that Vertigo didn't like and that the DCU does. We have this old character called Nightmaster, who used to run this bookstore called The Oblivion a long time ago. I've turned the bookstore into a bar, which is a bit more interesting as setting, and what we then have is a bunch of people going there for one last drink. They've heard that the Spectre is taking out all magic-based entities and magic-using characters and figure they're all doomed, so why not spend their last hours among friends, and maybe even get a good drunk on?"

SPOILER ALERT: The next paragraph reveals the identity of the female Eclipso. If you want to avoid this revelation, skip ahead one paragraph!

Was the identity of the new Eclipso already determined when Willingham signed on to the limited series? "Yes—their start for the story was, in fact, 'Jean Loring becomes the new Eclipso and convinces the Spectre to wipe out magic. Go.' I saluted smartly and said, 'You got it.' But seriously—it was an intriguing thing. It was a fun conundrum to be given, and then tasked with making it all work."

END OF SPOILER ALERT

One member of the team that doesn't seem to fit in, at least on the surface, is the Ragman—the version by *Keith Giffen & Robert Loren Fleming* that has mystical ties. How'd he become a part of ***Day of Vengeance***?

"Everyone working in comics has their list of what characters they would love to do if they ever got the chance, and mine have never been the Superman/Batman type, A-list characters," Willingham said. "I've always looked at the characters that have *never* been handled in a way that their full potential has been explored. Ragman is a good example. The Spectre was doing all this stuff, and now, we need some guys to go after him. DC told me to use this team concept that I was thinking of for the Vertigo series that didn't go, so I was able to use all these also-rans, and second and third tier characters, and on their first mission, they get to take on the Spectre. It's suicide for them, but after a few drinks at the bar, their courage is bolstered, and they figure that they can go take on the big guy. It's possibly the first ever superhero team to be formed out of a bout of drunken desperation"

Another character who seems quite out of place in the series is a simian hero virtually unknown to contemporary readers. " I'd love to take credit for that,[including him] but that came on the second phone call with Dan, when he asked if there was any way I could fit Detective Chimp in there," Willingham said. "I think I nearly screamed into the phone that I would *love* to get Detective Chimp into the story... What *can't* be improved by having a talking monkey in it?"

So what has Detective Chimp been up to all these years? "That was all mine to figure out—all Dan asked was if I could fit him in there. So I started looking at what is interesting about Detective Chimp – he's a talking monkey, so that is in and of itself kind of interesting, but also, he hasn't been seen since the '50s, so where's he been? My simple answer and the one that ended up working is that he's been in this bar, drinking since the '50s. He's been on a single drunk for fifty years... He's not the cute and vivacious, 'I'm a chimp and I solve crimes!' from those more innocent times, it's more of a 'Yeah, I opened my detective agency, got a lot of work because it was cool to hire a chimpanzee, but as a non-human with no legal standing, I couldn't enforce any laws, so I couldn't make any of my clients pay, so I went bankrupt almost immediately.

"What do you do when you go bankrupt, and they turn off all of your utilities, and kick you out of your office and home? You go have a drink. Fifty years later, he's still there, and chimes in when everyone, with all of their alcoholic courage says, 'Let's go kick the Spectre's ass!' So now, this cranky little monkey that was in this back booth in The Oblivion joins in."

"Initially, he was only going to be comedy relief, sort of the character that lightens the mood when they get into a grim situation, but it turns out that since his ability is to talk to animals, that fits in pretty prominently in this story, so it was a nice little addition, even if we couldn't wring hilarity out of him."

Even a group of mystical heroes and a talking monkey will find it difficult to wage war against the Spectre, however—and that's crucial to the story. "Some of the early discussion about this talked about how each of these miniseries redefines one section of the DC Universe, and this is the one that redefines how magic works. Part of redefining that is that the Spectre *wrecks it*. By virtue of his actions, he's changing the nature of magic in the DCU. So yeah, for a good deal of time, he's succeeding in what he's setting out to do."

See the destructive beginning in ***Day of Vengeance #1***, which should be in comic shops at the same time as this issue of ***CSN***.

Viper's Summer Plans: A Snake Peek

Viper Comics, the company that made a splash in the comics field with *josh Howard's* ***Dead@17*** saga, has several new projects in the works for this summer, including an art book spotlighting the work of the ***Dead@17*** creator.

First up is ***Karma Incorporated,*** a three-issue limited series by *David Hopkins & Tom Kurzanski*, with colors by *Marlena Hall*. The series stars con artists, hackers, and a retired hitman who band together to launch a plan to make money by making people miserable. When a previous customer's adulterous wife hires Karma Inc., the lines become crossed and new lessons are learned....payback is hell.

Next up is ***The Middleman,*** a four-issue miniseries by television writer *Javier Grillo-Marxuach* and artist *Les McClaine*. In the world of the ***The Middleman,*** reality as we know it is a carefully constructed sham. Our way of life is constantly under attack by monsters, aliens and talking primates. So why is almost no one aware of the struggle? The answer isn't the Men in Black... it's the Middleman. Working in absurd secrecy, the Middleman stares down threats from the extra-, infra- and juxta-terrestrial with a big gun and a have-a-nice-day grin. The Middleman: he fights evil so you don't have to.

The final summer offering is the ***Josh Howard Art Book Volume One,*** a limited edition package that will spotlight Howard's "cute girl" art.

Josh Howard Art Book Volume One is scheduled for July release; both ***Karma Incorporated*** nor ***The Middleman*** should debut in July or August.

Ins & Outs

In! *Jeph Loeb*, who has been tapped to write the film version of *Will Eisner's* ***The Spirit.*** Loeb, well known to comics fans for his work on such landmark series as ***Superman/Batman, Batman: Hush, Batman: The Long Halloween,*** and the upcoming ***Supergirl,*** is also the Supervising Producer of ***Smallville.*** The film is being developed by Odd Lot Entertainment and Batfilm Productions, with Odd Lot's *Gigi Pritzker* and *Deborah Del Prete* will produce, along with Batfilm's *Michael Uslan*.

Out! ***The Expatriate #1,*** the first issue of the *B. Clay Moore-Jason Latour* adventure-suspense series, which sold out entirely from the publisher. "The next few issues will feature everything from astronauts to the Beatles," Moore said. "With lots of running, a bit of being caught, some horrific body modification, murder, mayhem, death and resurrection. As the book progresses, I think people will be glad they stuck around." According to Image, it's unlikely the book will be reprinted.

Out (and In)! ***Combat Zone: True Tales of G.I.'s in Iraq,*** the limited series by *Karl Zinsmeister & Dan Jurgens* that offers a look at the war in Iraq based on first-hand experience from an embedded reporter who was there, has been removed from Marvel's schedule—but that's because the material will be presented in original graphic novel format instead. "I have eighty-eight pages completed, with twenty or so to go," Jurgens said. Look for the original graphic novel to be solicited this summer.

In! ***Green Lantern: Rebirth #2,*** which is going into a third edition later this month.This will make all issues of the limited series available once again prior to the release of the first issue of the ongoing ***Green Lantern*** series by *Geoff Johns & Carlos Pacheco*.

Out! ***Walking Dead #s 15 & 16*** and ***Walking Dead Volume One TP,*** all of which have sold out from Image. While there are no plans to reprint the sold-out comic books, the trade paperback is already going back to press. "This book just keeps on going up in sales," creator/writer *Robert Kirkman* said. "Every month I think, wow, we can't go any higher than this, and yet, the issues still keep selling out, and we keep printing more. This book is like magic or something. *Charlie Adlard, Cliff Rathburn* (who handles tones) and I couldn't be happier."

In! *Grant Morrison & J.H. Williams'* introductory ***Seven Soldiers #0*** is going back to press for a second printing. This will enable readers to see how it all began while Morrison continues to introduce the seven spinoff limited series that continue from this zero issue.

Out! ***Lullaby: Wisdom Seeker #s 1 & 2,*** the all-ages fantasy by *Mike S. Miller & Ben Avery,* have both sold out from Image. To meet the strong demand for the first issue, Miller made available through Diamond several hundred copies that he had initially planned to offer for sale at summer conventions, but those disappeared quickly.

In! ***Nightwing: Year One,*** the six-part storyline by *Chuck Dixon, Scott Beatty, Scott McDaniel, & Andy Owens* that has sold out issue after issue since it began in ***Nightwing #101,*** will be rush-released in trade paperback in July.

"Collaborating with my good friend *Chuck Dixon* is always an exciting ride, this time made even more thrilling with *Scott McDaniel & Andy Owens* rendering our story, " Beatty said. " Many thanks to the retailers for spreading the buzz about ***Nightwing: Year One*** and going above and beyond to see that their customers were able to find the issues. And much appreciation to the readers who were so supportive of this untold tale of Dick Grayson's transition from Teen Wonder to adult crime-fighter. "

" Scott and I have been very pleased with the fan response to all the ***Year Ones*** we've done, " Dixon added. " This sell-out is especially gratifying since it's a return to a title I've had a lot of success with in the past. Plus, I got teamed with Mr. McDaniel again, which is *always* a blast."

Bendis Is M-inently Prepared

One of the biggest events in the Marvelverse is set to debut this summer—and writer *Brian Bendis* is the mastermind behind it all! ***House of M,*** a limited series (and more) that spins out of the events of last year's ***Avengers Disassembled,*** brings together some of the most powerful heroes in the Marvel Universe to deal with the problem of the Scarlet Witch, former Avenger and daughter of one of the most powerful mutants alive. And it's going to take the Avengers, the X-Men, and more to resolve that problem!

Written by *Brian Bendis*, with art by penciler *Olivier Coipel, Tim Townsend, & Frank D'Armata*, the eight issue miniseries promises to seriously alter the status quo of the Marvel Universe. Bendis explained how the series came about. "***Disassembled*** was flowing, and I was talking to *Joe [Quesada*, Marvel's editor-in-chief] and said, 'Hey, you know – there's something bigger here, this X-Men/Avengers thing, because there's a connection for both the teams that they would each have to deal with, with the Magneto ending, and all of that," Bendis told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*.

"Joe gave me one of his 'whatever' looks, and then a day later, asked if I was serious about it. I guess it took a little while to sink in. Then it was approached in a bigger meeting, and everyone started riffing on it, because it affects so many other people's books. Honestly, I was worried about that part of it—everyone has plans for their own book, whether they've told their editors or not, and I didn't want to be stepping on anyone or everyone's toes just because I came up with an idea.

"So the meeting started off as tossing the idea out, and asking people if they thought it was a good thing or a bad thing, and that's when people started riffing on it, and adding their own stories into the larger mix. That's when it all became bigger—I don't, and hadn't been thinking event, I had only been thinking story.

"I don't go into the editorial meetings and declare that I have an event. It was very important to me that anyone involved wanted to be involved, and no one's stories were getting screwed up. I mean, I remember reading stuff as a kid, and you could tell that ***Secret Wars II*** was being shoved down the throats of the creative teams on the series at the time.

"So it was nice that everyone saw it as something that they could have fun with in their own books. It's also one of those one-time deals—you can't dip into this pond too many times. You have to do it once, and do it right."

The story begins a few months after the end of ***Avengers Disassembled,*** but Bendis is constructing ***House of M*** so that it's accessible to readers who never followed the Avengers story arc. "It's very clear—there's nothing more basic than a father-daughter relationship, and the pain of a father when his daughter is ill. It's also got a very clear, very concise view of the things that have gone on in the Marvel Universe, and everyone's fear is very clear."

Bendis credits editor *Tom Brevoort* with pulling ***House of M*** together and making all the elements work. "What he was able to do, to take my ramblings, and craft it into something that everyone else could look at and then add to—he just blew it away. You look at someone who has

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the number of years of experience that someone like Tom, or *Ralph Macchio* has working in the Marvel Universe, and it's this kind of project where they get to fire on all cylinders... Tom just killed in the organization and seeing the logical ripple effects. I couldn't even begin to take credit for the editorial finesse that is involved – Tom's able to keep track and guide something like forty creators working on stories connected to ***House of M***, and have it all fit and make sense. I'm just in awe of what he's doing with it all."

Where do things stand as the first issue unfolds? "Wanda... who's the daughter of the biggest mutant terrorist of all time, has these reality-altering powers, and she has lost control of them through the stress of life – the physical and mental stress that her powers, undefined as they were for so many years, had put upon her. So here she is: a mutant who has lost control of her powers.

"...In the Marvel Universe, that's one of the top ten, probably in the top *two* biggest fears of humankind. Many people in the Marvel Universe know they're sharing the planet with mutants, and now, one has totally lost control. And it's one of the most powerful ones.

"When humans are afraid of mutants in the Marvel Universe, what are they afraid of? They're afraid of a mutant who is totally out of control – that affects their lives.

"So, if the word got out that a reality-altering mutant was responsible for the hellish nightmare that was the end of the Avengers, as well as a pretty lousy day for New York City as well—can you imagine? Anybody who is looking to get the mutants, to turn public sentiment against them, to control them, to imprison them even, there's the smoking gun. Wanda's the smoking gun.

"On top of that, you have Magneto who, for all intents and purposes, sold his entire life and the happiness of his children for war against the humans, which he lost... He's tried for years, and he's never gotten what he wanted. He lost. Genosha is in ruins, mutants do not control the earth, and he does not control the mutants.

Nothing that he wanted happened.

"And, on top of that, he lost his children. He's looking at his daughter who's now the worst case scenario for mutants; and his son...ehhh...don't even get him started. It's the worst thing he could imagine.

"From there, you have Xavier trying desperately to do what he can do, and he can't even hold it together for Wanda. From there, the story launches.... what will the assembled X-Men and Avengers do?... There's a real moral problem in how to deal with this. Here's someone who, for the Avengers, part of their family. Also, with the X-Men...you can talk a good game about what you think the world should be like, and what you stand for, but when you're faced with a real moral conundrum, what do you do with this problem?"

One solution that the heroes at least consider is the ultimate solution: the permanent elimination of the Scarlet Witch—as in execution. "It's a discussion among the characters, but nothing is being preached, because I don't have an opinion about it, myself. But, of course, the characters have very distinct opinions that they have voiced over the years, so it's nice to have all those opinions in a room, having a conversation.

"If you put these characters in a room, and that subject comes up, Captain America is going to say what he wants to say, Wolverine is going to say what he wants to say, and no one is going to back down, because they really believe what they believe. That makes for interesting conversation, and hey, I think people know at this point that I would never shy away from characters having, what I believe would be an interesting conversation... But I know—a lot of people are going to get pretty sensitive when the subject is brought up."

What role will Quicksilver, Wanda's brother, play in all this? "Pietro and Wanda have both wavered back and forth on issues, one, obviously being a member of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants and being an Avenger two days later, but he's also a man who has dedicated his life to protecting his sister... and he didn't. Knowing what Quicksilver is like, who would he blame the most for this? Himself. So, that's all addressed in the first issue as well, and he will be a major part of what's going on as well."

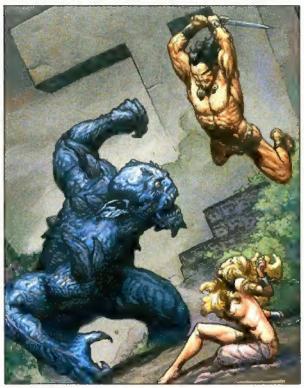
Bendis thinks it's important for readers to realize that there's no universal consensus among the Marvel heroes as far as Wanda's fate is concerned. "You don't have a summit meeting between the two most powerful groups of heroes on the planet and have them all agree with one another. You're going to see relationships and motivations change as a result of what happens in the story—starting with the meeting."

This series will also help to link the pre- and post-***Avengers Disassembled*** Marvel. "You're going to be seeing the 'old' Avengers and the New Avengers together throughout the entire series. I know some people were fearful that the classic Avengers were going to be thrown by the wayside, but even before ***House of M*** started taking shape, that was never the intention. They're all going to find nice homes and move on to their next chapters, and this is one of the bigger ones."

"You also get some characters you haven't seen in a long time, like Cloak and Dagger coming back front and center. I think people will be surprised who ends up in the cast for the bulk of the story.

"And a *ton* of X-characters. Many that people haven't seen in a long, long time..."

House of M #1 is scheduled for mid-June release.



Coming Comics
Dark Horse in July

Uh oh... fan-fave ***Conan*** artist *Cary Nord* is running a little bit behind, and that means that it's fill-in issue time! But this isn't just any fill-in: Dark Horse has enticed long-time friend and sometimes writing partner *Fabian Nicieza* to join *Kurt Busiek* for ***Conan #18,*** a special standalone issue featuring two tales—one illustrated by *Bruce Timm*, and the other by comic book legend *John Severin*. The Busiek-Timm story is described by Dark Horse as "a brief, sadistic little adventure involving a girl, a wizard, a monster, and Conan's very morbid sense of humor," while the Busiek-Nicieza-Severin story picks up a loose end from Conan #3, as Conan's destiny is misinterpreted by a series of luckless warriors and shameless opportunists, leading to nothing but misery.

The creative collective known as Cosmic Debris bring the moody, brooding ***Emily the Strange*** to Dark Horse with the release of ***Emily The Strange #1: The Boring Issue***. Nobody knows much about the young girl with a porcelain face and huge eyes framed by black bangs, and her ever-present brood of black cats only adds to the intrigue—but that hasn't stopped a generation of rabid fans from letting Emily put her spell upon them. Now, Dark Horse Comics and Cosmic Debris present the first-ever Emily comic books, published as deluxe single issues with all-new stories and art. Each issue of Emily comics will feature forty-eight pages of black, white, and red art (with the occasional outburst of full-color freak-outs!), illustrating a wacky range of Emily stories.

Acclaimed creator *Mike Mignola* concludes his latest all-new ***Hellboy*** adventure, ***Hellboy: The Island,*** in the second issue of the two-pat adventure. And what a conclusion it is, as Mignola presents the biggest turning point in his Hellboy saga, establishing his character firmly in the weirdest traditions of authentic gothic horror.

Buronson & Kentaro Miura's dystopian saga ***Japan*** makes its English-language debut this summer; this is a complex, mature metaphorical tale that works on multiple levels. As the story begins, Yuka Katsuragi, a beautiful TV news reporter, has attracted the affections of Yakuza thug Katsuji Yashima, who travels with his brother all the way to Spain to find her, only to have his affections rebuffed by Yuka. A terrible earthquake hits, and Katsuji, his brother, and Yuka, along with four high-schoolers in Spain on a field trip, all fall deep underground. While trapped below the surface, they encounter a mysterious old woman who reveals to them prophecies that the wealthy nation of Japan will meet the same demise as the once-prosperous city of Carthage. Katsuji and the others insult the old woman, who then sends them to see the world of the future with their own eyes, a future of desolation and death...

The long-delayed ***Kong: King of Skull Island,*** fully authorized by the Cooper Estate and based on the original novel that inspired the classic film, is back on Dark Horse's schedule. Produced by *Joe DeVito & Brad Strickland*, this tale serves as both a prequel and a sequel to the classic story that begins twenty-five years after the death of Kong, as the son of Carl Denham makes a shocking discovery that leads him back to the site of his father's greatest adventure and to the answers that will unlock the century's greatest mystery and history's greatest miracle.

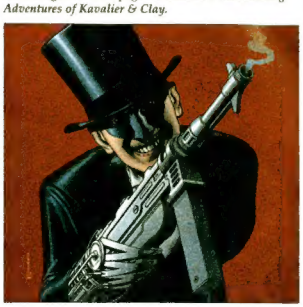
A modified Darth Vader is the latest release in Dark Horse's Japanese-import model kit series. ***Kotobukiya Star Wars Darth Vader #2 Pre-Painted Soft Vinyl Model Kit*** incorporates a new pose for Darth Vader, stopped in battle, lightsaber behind him, as he summons the power of the dark side to assist in his evil ways. Also slated for July release is the ***Kotobukiya Star Wars StormTrooper with Interchangeable Luke Skywalker Head Prepainted Soft Vinyl Model Kit*** (try saying that one three times fast!), offering you the opportunity to re-enact the famous Episode IV scene where Luke and Han Solo rescue Princess Leia, disguised as the Empire's soldiers.

Lulu and Tubby return to the toy shelves in the form of Dark Horse's ***Little Lulu and Tubby Soft Vinyl Figures.*** These eight inch tall figures, available individually, depict the not-so-dynamic duo as they've been depicted in comics over the years.

Tony Millionaire is back with a pair of interconnected stories in ***Little and Large,*** a forty-page original hardcover. When Ann Louise's grandfather crashes through the woods to cut down a tree for use in his workshop, he never stops to think about all the creatures making their home in it. Uncle Gabby then meets a spider displaced from his tree house and begins a quest to find him a new place to live.

Diehard ***Matrix*** fans will want to add the ***Matrix Neo and Trinity Statues*** to their collections. Portrayed by Keanu Reeves, the ***Neo Statue*** is based upon actual three-dimensional scans of the actor himself. The statue, which creates the illusion of Neo suspended in midair, is 15" tall. The ***Trinity Statue,*** based on *Carrie-Anne Moss'* character, is also produced using three-dimensional computer scanning to capture the likeness of the heroine on her elaboratelv tricked-out motorcvcle.

For the first time ever, *Michael Chabon* is writing every story in ***Michael Chabon Presents the Adventures of the Escapist...*** and they feature no Escapist at all! Instead, readers of the seventh issue will find a full-length story introducing the mysterious Mr. Machine Gun, a character torn straight from the pages of Chabon's ***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay.***



Firefly, the *Joss Whedon*-created television series, is soon to metamorphose into the feature film ***Serenity***—but before that film debuts, Dark Horse and Whedon will fill in the gap between television series and film with the three-issue ***Serenity*** limited series, produced by Whedon with *Brett Matthews, Will Conrad, & Laura Martin*. The crew of Serenity once again find themselves broke and on the wrong side of a number of very large firearms, making the first issue a case study in how to mix intense, Whedon-style character interaction with cinematic action and violence. Each issue of the series will feature three covers, one for each member of the Serenity crew, drawn by the biggest names in comics. The first issue features Mal by *John Cassaday*, Inara by *J. G. Jones*, and Jayne by *Bryan Hitch*.

Jeremy Love & Robert Love present spooky adventures for all ages in ***Shadow Rock,*** an original eighty-page full-color graphic novel. After his mother's death, young Timothy London moves from the big city to the small New England fishing town of Shadow Rock to live with his father. His new home is up the hill from a legendary haunted lighthouse where Timothy discovers the ghost of Kendahl Fog, a little boy who died under mysterious circumstances. Timothy and his new ghostly companion set out to explore the dark underbelly of Shadow Rock and the mystery of Kendahl's death.

Dark Horse collected editions for July and August include:

- ***The Incredibles,*** adapting the Disney / Pixar film; and
- ***Little Lulu: Lulu in the Doghouse TP,*** collecting another 200+ pages of classic *John Stanley-Irving Tripp* all-ages short tales.

Top Two-Dozen for May

Action Comics #827

Gail Simone (W)¦
John Byrne & Nelson (A)
(DC MAR050382 $2.50)

Adventures of Superman #640

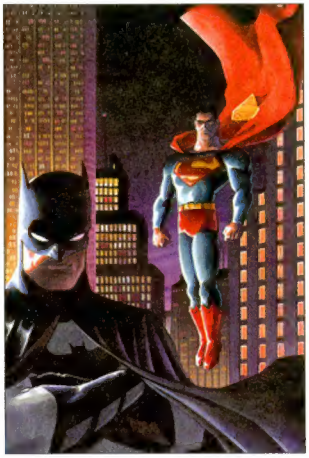
Greg Rucka (W)¦
Karl Kerschl (A)
(DC MAR050383 $2.50)

Superman #217

Mark Verheiden (W)¦
Ed Benes (A)
(DC MAR050384 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Now that the Azzarello-Lee "For Tomorrow" twelve-parter has wrapped up, it's time for a major Superman refocus: new creative teams, tighter continuity, and a stronger connection to the changing DC Universe.

Why Should You Care?
With Simone, Rucka, & Verheiden on board, the emphasis is on sharp storytelling—and with Byrne, Kerschl, & Benes handling the visuals, that storytelling couldn't look better! Big things are in store for the DCU in 2005—and Superman's going to play a vital role.



Batman #640

Judd Winick (W)¦
Doug Mahnke & Tom Nguyen (A)
(DC MAR050364 $2.25)

What's the Scoop?
The Red Hood has a new target: Gotham's sadistic crime boss the Black Mask. While the situation gets more ominous in Gotham, Batman's paying a visit to Metropolis to call on the Man of Steel.

Why Should You Care?
After the unexpected revelations of ***Batman #638***, everyone's dying to find out what *Judd Winick* has planned next! (But of course, *dying* doesn't mean what it used to in Gotham!...)

Batman: Dark Detective #1

Steve Englehart (W)¦ Marshall Rogers & Terry Austin (A)
(DC MAR050370 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (MAR052848 $19.99)

Batman: Dark Detective #2

Steve Englehart (W)¦ Marshall Rogers & Terry Austin (A)
(DC MAR050371 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The Joker... Two-Face... The Scarecrow... Silver St. Cloud... Batman's life is about to get very complicated—and so is Bruce Wayne's!

Why Should You Care?
This 1970's superstar dream-team reunites for a story that picks up where their historic run left off. Someone let Thomas Wolfe know that you *can* go home again!

Bit of Madness TP

Emmanuel Civiello (W/A)
(Checker MAR052717 $24.95)

What's the Scoop?
It's a real elf quest as a young elf named Igguk is sent on a quest to find the magical Heart of Crystal before it falls into the hands of the Lord of Darkness—and the fate of his world hangs on his success.

Why Should You Care?
Civiello's "Froud meets McKean" art style is showcased in this super-high-quality oversized edition of this grand fantasy tale.

Day of Vengeance #2

Bill Willingham (W)¦
Justiniano & Walden Wong (A)
(DC MAR050397 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
The Spectre and the new Eclipso want to eliminate all magic from the DC Universe—and they're destined to succeed unless a ragtag alliance known as the Shadowpact can stop their scheme. But do Ragman, Blue Devil, The Enchantress, Nightmaster, and Detective Chimp have a chance against that sort of magical power?

Why Should You Care?
The magical corner of the DC Universe is about to get shaken to its core in this series that grows out of the events depicted in the landmark ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis.***

Desolation Jones #1

Warren Ellis (W)¦
J.H. Williams III (A)
(WildStorm/DC MAR050463 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (MAR052855 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
A former intelligence officer who survived a horrific experiment called the Desolation Test tries to reclaim what's left of his life—and to earn his keep, he's working as a detective-for-hire to the underground community of ex-spooks trying to make new lives for themselves in LA. After all, it's not like these guys can go to the *cops* when their old lives come back to haunt them...

Why Should You Care?
Warren Ellis returns to what he does best with this edgy, character-driven noiresque drama illustrated by the inimitable *J.H. Williams III*, fresh off his unforgettable stint on ***Promethea***.

Fantastic Four #527

J. Michael Straczynski (W)¦
Mike McKone (A)
(Marvel MAR051871 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
J. Michael Straczynski & Mike McKone take over the creative honors on ***Fantastic Four*** beginning with this issue.

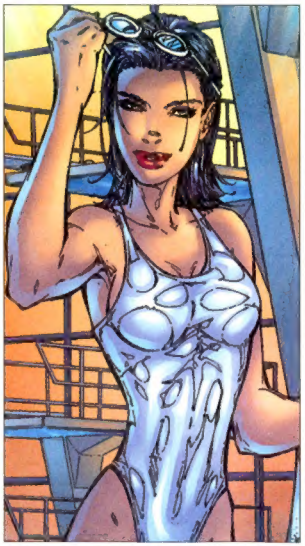
Why Should You Care?
The writer who revitalized Amazing Spider-Man brings his blend of characterization and sense of wonder to Marvel's flagship title.

Fathom: Prelude #1

J.T. Krul (W)¦ Ale Garza (A)
(Dynamite MAR052765 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
How did young Aspen Mathews develop into the heroine-star of *Michael Turner's* ***Aspen?*** Find out in this original standalone story that looks back at the character's formative years.

Why Should You Care?
Writer *J.T. Krul* and artist *Ale Garza*, tapped by Turner himself, offer this full-length tale that serves as a great introduction to ***Fathom*** for new readers and a can't-miss exploration of the character's past for fans of the series.



FRIDAY THE 13TH SPECIAL #1

Brian Pulido (W)¦ Mike Wolfer (A)
(Avatar MAR052646 $3.99)

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET SPECIAL #1

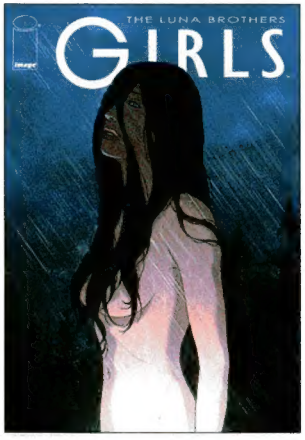
Brian Pulido (W)¦ Juan Jose Ryp (A)
(Avatar MAR052634 $3.99)

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE SPECIAL #1

Brian Pulido (W)¦ Jacen Burrows (A)
(Avatar MAR052640 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?
Splatterpunk moves from the big screen to the comic book page as Avatar presents a trio of original tales produced by comics' horror-meister, *Brian Pulido.*

Why Should You Care?
Far from bland homogenized horror stories, these are brutal tales filled with the gore and mayhem that horror film fans have come to expect. Definitely *not* for those with a dread for red!...



GIRLS #1

Joshua Luna (W)¦ Jonathan Luna (A)
(Image MAR051667 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
Every man has dreams of the perfect woman he can't live without... but when Ethan Daniels meets his ideal fantasy woman, he soon learns that maybe it's best if fantasies don't come true...

Why Should You Care?
The creative team responsible for the sleeper hit ***Ultra*** offer another quirky, intriguing look at the always-offbeat relationships between men and women.

GREEN LANTERN #1

Geoff Johns (W)¦ Carlos Pacheco & Jesus Merino (A)
(DC MAR050403 $3.50; also available in a signed edition (MAR052844 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
Hal Jordan is back as Green Lantern. But there are some who hope to manipulate this transition for their own purposes—and they have dreams of perverting the power of the Green Lantern for their own use.

Why Should You Care?
Green Lantern: Rebirth proved that Hal Jordan has star potential; now DC delivers on that potential with a forty-page premiere issue of this all-star monthly series that restores the grandeur of the Green Lantern saga.

JSA #73

Geoff Johns (W)¦ Don Kramer & Keith Champagne (A)
(DC MAR050411 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
"Black Vengeance," a three-part tie-in with ***Day of Vengeance,*** begins here as the Spectre confronts the evil of Black Adam while Captain Marvel rejoins the JSA as they venture into enemy territory to face one of the most powerful forces in the DC Universe.

Why Should You Care?
Not only does this story tie in with one of this year's biggest DC miniseries, it's also a sequel to last year's acclaimed best-selling "Black Reign" story arc.

MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER VOL 1 GN

Louise Simonson (W)¦ Damien Hendricks (A)
(iBooks MAR052954 $6.95)

What's the Scoop?
As if his war with totalitarian robots wasn't enough to keep him busy, now Magnus must also combat the Traffickers, an alien race interested in the Earth's natural resources... including human beings, who the Traffickers intend to use for slave labor and for food!

Why Should You Care?
Veteran storyteller *Louise Simonson* offers an updated look at a comic book classic in the first of a series of original graphic novels that revisit *Russ Manning's* Tarzan of 40,0000 AD.

MATADOR #1

Devin Grayson (W)¦ Brian Stelfreeze (A)
(WildStorm/DC MAR050467 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Dismissed as nothing more than a quota minority hire by her fellow detectives on the force, Isabel Cardona can't get anyone to take seriously her theories that a series of seemingly unrelated murders are actually linked to an urban-legend killer known as the Matador. Cardona knows that she can prove the Matador is real if she can just get close enough to him—but how close is close enough... and how close is too close?

Why Should You Care?
Devin Grayson is right in her element with this psychological suspense tale—and she couldn't have asked for a better artist than *Brian Stelfreeze,* whose elegantly dynamic style captures the cinematic feel of this thriller.

OMAC PROJECT #2

Greg Rucka (W)¦ Jesus Saiz (A)
(DC MAR050415 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Battle lines are drawn between Superman and Batman as the secrets of the hero-monitoring Brother Eye satellite are revealed; meanwhile, the threat moves to the next level as Checkmate commands the OMAC Project to kill... but who's the intended victim?

Why Should You Care?
The darker side of the DCU's heroes, first revealed in ***Identity Crisis,*** is spotlighted in this groundbreaking limited series that leads into this fall's ***Infinite Crisis.***

RANN THANAGAR WAR #1

Dave Gibbons (W)¦ Ivan Reis & Marc Campos (A)
(DC MAR050421 $2.50; also available in a signed edition (MAR052847 $34.99))

What's the Scoop?
An evil has escaped from the depths of Thanagar, and now two worlds are threatened by its malevolence... and if they fall, countless other civilizations might follow. That's why Adam Strange, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Hawkgirl, and the rest of DC's spacefaring heroes unite in an all-out effort to stop an interplanetary war from exploding.

Why Should You Care?
The third ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis*** limited series spotlights the DCU's cosmic quadrant in a saga that also has links to the sleeper hit ***Adam Strange*** limited series.

SHADOWHAWK #1

Jim Valentino & Jim Keplinger (W)¦ Carlos Rodriguez (A)
(Image MAR051669 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Teenager Eddie Collins finds life in New York far more exciting than he ever imagined, thanks in large part to a mystical helmet that transforms the young man into the latest incarnation of a heroic lineage that dates back to ancient Egypt.

Why Should You Care?
Fresh from ***The Pact,*** the Imageverse's newest teen hero graduates to his own ongoing series

STARDUST KID #1

J.M. DeMatteis (W)¦ Mike Ploog (A)
(Image MAR051683 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?
Four children wake from a peaceful night's sleep to discover that their world has been transformed overnight into something twisted and corrupt. Now it's up to those four children to restore the world they know... if they can overcome an evil older than time.

Why Should You Care?
A new, darkly fascinating all-ages fantasy from the creators of ***Abadazad***—this one's destined to become a classic!

SMOKE #1

ALEX DE CAMPI (W); IGOR KORDEY (A)
(IDW MAR052962 $7.49)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Cain gave up his life as a soldier to become a government assassin—and now he must content with an unusual terrorist group, a vindictive ex-girlfriend, and a team of heavies dispatched by his own former employers. Will Cain be able to withstand this assault from all directions?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Former ***X-Men*** artist *Igor Kordey* ventures in a new direction with this dark, edgy adventure series with dark humor undertones.

SUPERMAN BATMAN #19

JEPH LOEB (W); IAN CHURCHILL & NORM RAPMUND (A)
(DC JAN050284 $2.99; also available in a remarked edition (JAN052732 $69.99) and a signed edition (JAN052731 $49.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
What's Supergirl been up to since ***Superman/Batman #13?*** Find out in a special standalone issue that reveals what Kara has been doing since ***Superman/Batman #13.***

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
The story arc that introduced Supergirl was one of the biggest events of 2004, and this comic bridges the gap between that best-selling arc and the upcoming ***Supergirl*** series slated to debut later this year.

TOP TEN: THE FORTY NINERS HC

ALAN MOORE (W); GENE HA (A)
(ABC/DC MAR050475 $24.99; also available in a remarked edition (MAR052856 $69.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Before Smax, King Peacock, Toybox, Joe Pi, and the rest of the Top Ten cast signed on as protectors of Neopolis, there were others who also risked life and limb, using their amazing abilities to make the city of the future what it was destined to become. Those first officers of Top Ten are the focus of this original graphic novel.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Alan Moore & Gene Ha offer new insights into the most fascinating corner of Moore's ABC Universe.

VILLAINS UNITED #1

GAIL SIMONE (W); DALE EAGLESHAM & WADE VON GRAWBADGER (A)
(DC MAR050424 $2.50; also available in a signed edition (MAR052853 $19.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
The villains of the DC Universe have challenged DC's heroes for decades... but now a cadre of those villains intends to organize the evildoers into an overwhelming force that will challenge the might of those heroes... and defeat them!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
The fourth ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis*** spinoff propels the members of DC's underworld into the spotlight in a super-powered drama with links to ***Identity Crisis.***

YEAR ONE: BATMAN SCARECROW #1

BRUCE JONES (W); SEAN MURPHY (A)
(DC MAR050367 $5.99; also available in a signed edition (MAR052849 $29.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Return to the beginning of the Scarecrow's career with this two-issue series that begins with Jonathan Crane's birth and follows his story up to his first confrontation with Batman and Robin.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Bruce Jones, best known for his moody stint on ***Incredible Hulk,*** makes his DC Universe debut with this insightful look at Batman's frightening foe—and with Scarecrow playing a major role in this summer's ***Batman Begins,*** there'll be legions of readers looking for insight into what's picking at the straw man.

CHECK 'EM OUT:

BOOKS YOU SHOULD BE READING

CITY OF HEROES #1

(Image MAR051732 $2.99)

Mark Waid & David Nakayama kick off a new series inspired by the videogame. Whereas the earlier ***City of Heroes*** series was hampered by undistinguished stories and art, this series is driven by Waid' imaginative storytelling, which seems to have inspired newcomer Nakayama to turn in a first-class art job.

GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #3

(Marvel MAR051919 $4.99)

Okay, the reprint material isn't a great reason to pick up this annual—but the original eight-page story is, since it's written by *Joss Whedon* and illustrated by comics legend *Neal Adams*, whose short-lived run on ***X-Men*** back in the Silver Age is considered a high point in X-history. The only bad news is that *it's only* eight pages...

HARDY BOYS VOL 2: IDENTITY THEFT GN

(NBM MAR053051 $7.95; also available in HC (MAR053052 $12.95)

NANCY DREW VOL 2: WRIT IN STONE GN

(NBM MAR053053 $7.95; also available in HC (MaR053054 $12.95))

These original graphic novels by NBM bring a manga look to the ever-popular teen detectives whose adventures have thrilled generation after generation of younger readers. The stories by *Scott Lobdell* and *Stefan Petrucha* capture the vitality of the prose novels in lively, enthusiastic, fast-paced mystery tales that have much more panache than the lackluster prose novels that have seen print over the last few years.

HERO SQUARED #1

(Boom MAR052699 $3.99)

If you like *Keith Giffen & J.M. DeMatteis'* irreverent humor in ***JLA Classified,*** you'll love this zany tale of a contemporary slacker whose life is turned upside down when his alternate-world superhero doppelganger moves in.

HICKEE VOL 3 #1

(Alternative MAR052520 $2.95)

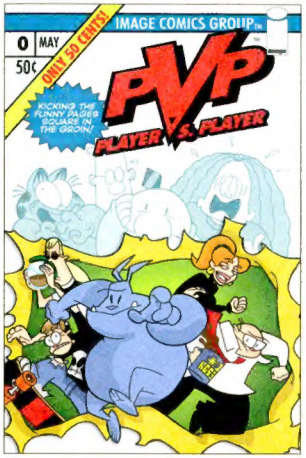
Jeff Mason's Alternative Comics continues to push the edge with this original anthology of offbeat material by *Graham Annable, Scott Campbell, Joe White, Nathan Stapley, Razmig Mavlian, Paul Brown, & Vamberto Maduro.*

MAN WITH THE SCREAMING BRAIN #1

(Dark Horse MAR050017 $2.99)

B-movie megastar *Bruce Campbell* comes to comics with this adaptation of his upcoming feature film, featuring the story as Campbell wanted

it told before Hollywood's budgeting process forced him to compromise. No compromises here, though!



PVP #0

(Image MAR051679 50¢)

Scott Kurtz' bargain-priced primer offers new readers a perfect opportunity for readers to sample his gaming humor comic.

STRANGE EGGS #1

(Amaze Ink MAR052547 $3.95)

A who's who of Amaze Ink talent is joined by a few guests to tell the tales of Kyle & Kelly Hatcher; a lonely brother and sister who get a Strange Egg delivered to them every week. Omelettin' you know now, this is top-notch stuff!

HOT COMMODITIES!

MAY'S HOTTEST MERCHANDISING•COLLECTIBLES

BATMAN BEGINS BATARANG PROP REPLICA

(DC Direct MAR050355 $150.00)

BATMAN BEGINS BATMAN IN FLIGHT STATUE

(DC Direct MAR050356 $195.00)

BATMAN BEGINS BATMAN ON ROOFTOP STATUE

(DC Direct MAR050357 $89.99)

BATMAN BEGINS BATMOBILE REPLICA

(DC Direct MAR050354 $195.00)

BATMAN BEGINS CHRISTIAN BALE BATMAN MINI STATUE

(DC Direct MAR050360 $29.99)

There was no DC Direct in the glory days of 1989's film-inspired Batmania—but this time, DC is making sure that fans have an assortment of first-class high-quality limited edition collectibles to choose from, all inspired by the upcoming hit film. Why count on others to do the job when you can do it better on your own?

FIRST APPEARANCE SERIES 3: BATGIRL ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV040369 $19.99)

FIRST APPEARANCE SERIES 3: COMPOSITE SUPERMAN ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV040368 $19.99)

FIRST APPEARANCE SERIES 3: NIGHTWING ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV040370 $19.99)

FIRST APPEARANCE SERIES 3: RIDDLER ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV040371 $19.99)

A new quartet of action figures inspired by classic comic book first appearances, ranging from the glory days of the 1960's Silver Age Riddler to the contemporary introduction of the modern Batgirl.

MARVEL SELECT EMMA FROST ACTION FIGURE

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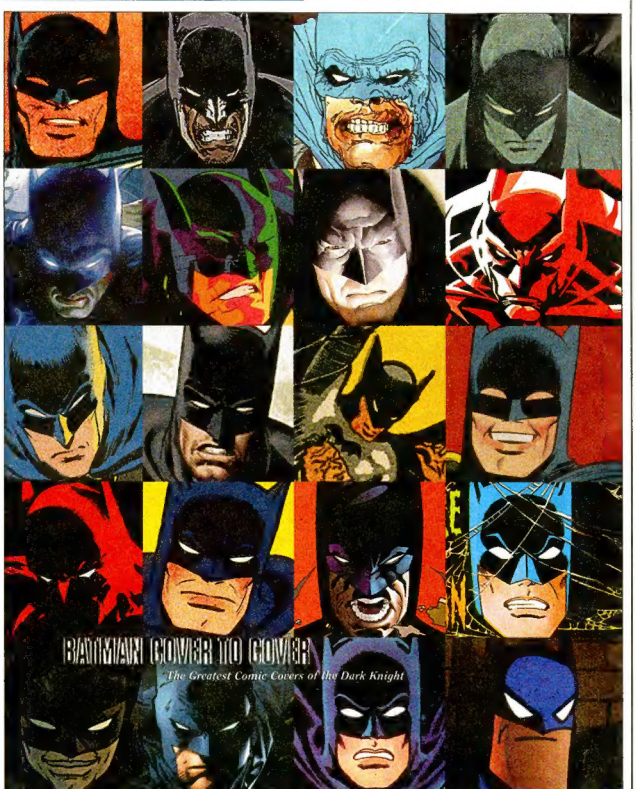

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